

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 ACDA-12 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /110 W
-----084058 111725Z /47

P 111644Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0305
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
DIA WASHDC
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 07424

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

USSALTTWO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PROP, PINT, UR, PARM
SUBJECT: BREZHNEV WINDS UP TRIP, ATTENDS KREMLIN MEETING
NEXT MORNING
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SUMMARY. BREZHNEV'S RETURN TO MOSCOW FROM VLADIVOSTOK
WAS PRECEDED BY A QUICK SIDE-TRIP TO KOMSOMOLSK, WHERE
LEONID IL'ICH VISITED TWO FACTORIES AND ADDRESSED A GROUP
OF WORKERS ON APRIL 8. HE FLEW BACK TO MOSCOW SUNDAY,
APRIL 9, AND TURNED UP AT 10:00 AM MONDAY MORNING FOR
THE OPENING SESSION OF THE RSFSR SUPREME SOVIET. SOVIET

TV CARRIED A RELATIVELY LENGTHY AUDIO AS WELL AS VIDEO ACCOUNT OF BREZHNEV'S APRIL 8 MEETING WITH KOMSOMOLSK WORKERS, IN WHICH BREZHNEV'S SPEAKING PERFORMANCE SEEMED A BIT BELOW HIS PAR. IN TV FILM OF HIS LAST DAYS ON THE ROAD, THE GENERAL SECRETARY LOOKED REASONABLY FIT BUT SOMEWHAT TIRED; HE GAVE THE SAME IMPRESSION WHEN SEEN IN PERSON AND ON TV AT THE APRIL 10 RSFSR SUPREME SOVIET MEETING. OVERALL, THE TRIP SERVED TO UNDERScore CURRENT ECONOMIC CONCERNS, TO HIGHLIGHT SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN SIBERIA AND THE FAR EAST (ALTHOUGH BREZHNEV DID NOT PUBLICLY MENTION THE PRC, OR ANY OTHER ASIAN COUNTRY), AND TO GIVE BREZHNEV AN UNUSUAL SETTING FOR A MAJOR SPEECH ON ARMS CONTROL. IT ALSO ENHANCED HIS IMAGE AS A HEALTHY, DYNAMIC LEADER. END SUMMARY.

1. AS IF TO UNDERScore HIS PERSONAL VIGOR, BREZHNEV OPTED TO MAKE A SIDE-TRIP TO KOMSOMOLSK PRIOR TO FLYING HOME FROM HIS LENGTHY SIBERIAN AND FAR EASTERN TRIP. HE FLEW FROM VLADIVOSTOK TO KOMSOMOLSK APRIL 8, TOURED THE CITY AND TWO OF ITS MACHINE-BUILDING FACTORIES, AND ADDRESSED A SMALL GROUP OF WORKERS AT THE SECOND FACTORY. THE THEMES OF HIS SHORT SPEECH WERE TYPICAL OF HIS EARLIER REMARKS DURING HIS TOUR: HE STRESSED THE REGION'S IMPORTANCE FOR THE SOVIET ECONOMY AS A WHOLE, PRAISED LOCAL WORKERS BUT CALLED FOR GREATER ECONOMIC DISCIPLINE, AND NOTED THE CONCERN OF CENTRAL AUTHORITIES

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TO IMPROVE CREATURE COMFORTS FOR WORKERS IN THE SOVIET FAR EAST.

2. FOR THE FIRST TIME DURING THE TRIP, CENTRAL TV CARRIED AUDI AS WELL AS VIDEO COVERAGE OF THE KOMSOMOLSK MEETING. BREZHNEV READ HIS SPEECH SLOWLY, SLURRED BADLY IN SOME SIX INSTANCES, BUT SEEMED REASONABLY ENERGETIC AND ALERT. AS WE HAVE NOTED IN HIS OTHER RECENT SPEAKING PERFORMANCES, ON THIS OCCASION BREZHNEV FREQUENTLY SMACKED HIS LIPS TOGETHER, AND A PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE MICROPHONE REGISTERED THE SOUND OF EACH SMACK. CLOSEUPS OF BOTH SIDES OF HIS FACE SHOWED SOME PUFFINESS AROUND HIS EYES BUT OTHERWISE NORMAL FACIAL FEATURES. HE WORE A HEARING AIDE BEHIND HIS LEFT EAR.

3. TV NEWS APRIL 9 SHOWED LEONID IL'ICH'S DEPARTURE FROM VLADIVOSTOK THAT DAY VIA AN IL-62 JET, AS WELL AS HIS ARRIVAL AT MOSCOW'S VNUKOV AIRPORT THE SAME AFTERNOON. BREZHNEV'S PHYSICAL MOVEMENTS APPEARED NORMAL.

4. AS IF TO LEAVE NO DOUBT ABOUT HIS HEALTH, THE GENERAL SECRETARY TURNED UP AT 10:00 A.M. MONDAY MORNING, APRIL 10, FOR THE OPENING SESSION OF THE RSFSR SUPREME SOVIET.

AS SEEN BY AN EMBASSY OFFICER SITTING IN THE DIPLOMATIC GALLERY, BREZHNEV APPEARED TO BE RELAXED AND FIT, AND SEEMED TO REMAIN ALERT DURING A LENGTHY SPEECH BY RSFSR PARTY BOSS SOLOMENTSEV ON THE RSFSR DRAFT CONSTITUTION. EMBOFF HAD SAME IMPRESSION WHEN BY COINCIDENCE HE OBSERVED LEONID IL'ICH FROM DISTANCE OF SOME 25 YARDS EXITING BUILDING AND ENTERING HIS LIMOUSINE. TV CLOSEUPS OF BREZHNEV AT THE MEETING SHOWED PUFFINESS UNDER HIS EYES, HOWEVER.

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USMISSION USNATO

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5. ON BALANCE, WE WOULD COUNT BREZHNEV'S TRIP AS A CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL SUCCESS. IN ADDITION TO HIGH-LIGHTING THE PARTY'S VIEW OF CURRENT ECONOMIC CONCERNS AND DELIVERING A MAJOR ARMS CONTROL SPEECH, HE POSED AS

A MAN OF THE PEOPLE BY TALKING TO WORKERS AS WELL
AS LOCAL OFFICIALS. HE DREW ATTENTION TO SOVIET MILITARY
MIGHT IN SIBERIA AND THE FAR EAST (WITHOUT, HOWEVER,
PUBLICLY MENTIONING THE PRC OR ANY OTHER ASIAN COUNTRY.)
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HIS VISITS TO THE FLEET AND TO THE MISSILE GROUP IN
NOVOSIBIRSK, AND ESPECIALLY HIS PRESENCE AT MILITARY
MANEUVERS NEAR THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER UNDERSCORED THE
SOVIET "NO GIVE" POSITION ON THE BORDER DISPUTE WITH
CHINA (A POSITION THAT WAS REPEATED IN COMPREHENSIVE FORM
IN AUTHORITATIVE APRIL 1 PRAVDA ARTICLE ON THE BORDER
RELEASED DURING BREZHNEV'S SIBERIA TRIP). IN THE PROCESS
BREZHNEV UNDOUBTEDLY ENHANCED HIS IMAGE AS AN ACTIVE,
HEALTHY LEADER. TOON

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Message Attributes

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TAGS: PROP, PINT, PARM, UR, (BREZHNEV, LEONID IL'ICH)
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